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AMERICAN EMBASSY, PARIS

March 21, 1954
8 PM

Sent: SECSTATE WASHINGTON. COLED 202. PRIORITY.

RPTD INFO: HICOG BONN. EYES ONLY CONANT. 717
AMEMBASSY LONDON. EYES ONLY AMBASSADOR. 816

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Re DEPTEL 3197 March 17.

Although I have never seen Bidault's letter to Secretary, I should like to expand on reasons stated in COLED 200 why I fear we must acknowledge disappointment of the favorable expectations this letter or other professions by French Government of impending action on EDC may have aroused.

If we deal realistically, forcefully and imaginatively with the causes of such disappointment there would still be reasonable hope of obtaining EDC ratification by French Parliament though at a date later than we had a legitimate right to anticipate. Otherwise we will be faced with a crisis in our European policy most difficult to resolve.

1. To be realistic we must contemplate probability that Laniel will continue to evade taking positive steps to push for speedy vote on EDC Treaty in Parliament. Under ex-Gaullist pressure he has enlarged his investiture declaration that Saar settlement, U.S. assurances, and U.K./EDC association were conditions of ratification by French Assembly to point where he appears to have decided that even fixing a date for debate will not be discussed by ~~French Cabinet until these~~ conditions have been completely fulfilled. This attitude is not inconsistent with his skill in persuading the anti-~~EDC Unas Ministers that~~ he was not to be feared on this issue, while simultaneously telling

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U.S. he was bending all his efforts to its early ratification.

2. In justification for not having thus far scheduled an EDC debate, Laniel may try to attribute failure to do so to recalcitrance of Chancellor Adenauer in Saar negotiations, to intransigear demands of French Socialists, to failure of British to go far enough in their proposed association with EDC, to nature of U.S. declaration, or to Government-inspired press comments that U.S. has exercised undue pressure. The fact is that all parties to the QUOTE package UNQUOTE requested by Laniel for ratification --- the U.S., the U.K., Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy, Luxembourg, Mollet and the Socialists, Pinay and the Independents --- have made clear their willingness to support his avowed program in every practicable manner.

3. Laniel now has in hand assurances from U.S. and U.K. that conditions set for U.S. and U.K. will be fulfilled in fashion that should be satisfactory to him. These assurances were given on U.S. and U.K. initiative so that French could go ahead and fix date for debate. In response to U.S. insistence that Germany abandon most of its previous contentions on Saar, Adenauer has reversed his position and accepted almost in toto, with exception of Article 19, general lines Council of Europe proposal for Saar settlement.

Chancellor has approached limits of his concessions without receiving in return from the French concessions on their part which he could use persuasively in his now-restive Parliament. French Government in official negotiations maintains its unreasonable deviations from Council of Europe report, even though orally Bidault has suggested

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to U.S. he might recede on certain points.

4. Moreover Laniel has still taken no steps either to give Mollet satisfaction or to reject long-standing Socialist request for a directly elected CSC and EDC Assembly, even though Mollet has drastically reduced his previous demands which initially were same as condition for EDC ratification proposed by French Assembly in its Resolution of February 1952.

5. Furthermore Laniel can continue indefinitely to prevent fulfillment of very conditions which he has established, and thus escape necessity of setting a date for debate on EDC. He can do this by postponing Saar settlement through refusal to make reasonable deal with Adenauer, or through claim that terms on which U.S. and U.K. are willing to guarantee such settlement are unsatisfactory. Also, he can use for same purpose Mollet's refusal to call Socialist Congress until French Government has given him satisfaction on direct elections.

6. I sincerely hope above analysis will prove to be largely mistaken. Bidault may decide to force Cabinet decision, fixing date for debate immediately after recess. (PAREN Bidault could presumably relieve pressure of UMAS threats to resign whenever he is personally, or under impulse from his Party, prepared to threaten resignation of MRP Ministers. end paren. If such decision should be forced we must obtain from French Government, and this time in the form of a definite commitment, its promise with regard to Saar settlement, to Mollet's request for directly elected Assembly PAREN so as to make

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certain of a disciplined vote of Socialist Deputies during debate on EDC ratification END PARTY and assurances ratification debate will be uninterrupted and Laniel will change his views against calling for a vote of confidence on the EDC so that this weapon will be used if it should prove necessary.

7. A vote on EDC Treaty is out of question before Easter, and while we could continue to ask for debate to open before then, failure of Laniel Cabinet to take actions necessary now makes even this almost a frivolous expectation. However, we must somehow persuade Laniel to reverse his refusal to fix date for debate before French Government conditions on ratification, as interpreted by him, have been fully met. This means date would be set but progress would be contingent upon accomplsihment Saar settlement in principle.

8. The later the consideration of the Indo-China problems is taken up at Geneva the better. The U.S. is certain to be asked to offer concessions to the Chinese Communists of a nature which we cannot grant. This will engender bitterness on both sides of the Atlantic and will effect in some measure the final result of the EDC debate in the French Parliament.

Therefore the sooner debate on EDC commences after the Easter recess the better. As previously said, it is of the greatest importance it be scheduled as an uninterrupted debate, and recourse to a vote of confidence be available.

9. The following suggestions surpass the competence of this Mission but I present them in conviction problem can still be solved by forceful approach.

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/We are dealing with a Government of men operating under one of the most ineffective of ~~xxxxx~~ constitutions where a Cabinet member may, without any impeachment of disloyalty, openly defy his ~~xxxx~~ Prime Minister. Nor are the Parliamentarians subject to any of the ordinary vicissitudes of political fortune. It worries them little if Cabinets shuffle or fall; only under the most unlikely circumstances do they nevertheless fail to remain in function for their allotted five years.

Under such fickle conditions we are not warranted in having faith in other than a solemn engagement on the part of French Government. After almost two years' experience with French instability of political purpose on EDC we have a proper right to demand an answer from a nation whose standing as one of the three great Western Powers has been almost entirely dependent on our good offices. END PAREN.

I recommend that amongst many choices we seriously consider the following, which I mention only as examples of what might be done.

1. ~~xxxxx~~ Henceforth as far as practicable we should present a united front with the British on all demands and negotiations regarding EDC. U.S. and U.K. should ask the French Government to fix prior to Easter recess a debate for an uninterrupted debate in which a vote of confidence may be used. This should be done regardless of status Saar negotiations.

2. Secretary Dulles should shortly announce he will stop in London on his way to the NATO meeting to talk to Churchill and Eden. It will not require any cunning to make the French conjecture that object of this meeting is Anglo-American review of European affairs to possible

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French disadvantage. The continuance of a tripartite relationship with the U.S. and U.K. is the very cornerstone of French policy. The most innocent conjunction of British and American officials always frightens the French into a nightmare in which they see the spectre of a revived and exclusive Anglo-American alliance.

3. Without any publicity, we might immediately undertake unilateral measures in Germany, and concert the same with the British, calculated to warn the French of the impossibility of their maintaining indefinitely, through the use of their veto, the Allied occupation status. Ambassador Conant would have, I imagine, some interesting proposals on this point.

4. A slowing down of military and item deliveries to the French metropolitan forces, and retarding for the time being the placement of off shore procurement contracts in France. Few high French officers realize the overwhelming extent to which maintenance of a national army is dependent upon U.S. bounty in the furnishing of equipment. Even Marshal Juin may cease his invectives against the EDC if he thinks we will not continue indefinitely to keep pouring military supplies into France. Moreover many French industrialists opposing EDC will think again if they no longer take it for granted that off shore procurement contracts will be placed with them regardless of France's policy on EDC.

5. I believe we should do nothing to jeopardize an eventual discussion at Geneva of the Indo-China problem. However we can be sticky about procedural matters relating thereto. This might be, if tactfully handled, extraordinarily effective.

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6. U.S. and U.K. should advise France and Germany that since a guaranty of any Saar settlement by the two of us is apparently being taken for granted, we wish to consult urgently with France and Germany on nature their proposed settlement. This would afford opportunity to tell Bidault that Maurice Schumann draft is in large part unacceptable to us as basis for guaranty or assurances.

Comment. If such measures as above are not effective there are many further actions we could take, such as in connection with aid bill, designed to show we intend to behave like a nation which may have to change its basic strategy. military for European defense and to adjust its political alliances. We have tried reason, persuasion, generosity, understanding, sympathy patience: all have failed and I see no alternative but to deal with French as cold bloodedly as they deal with us. They have, it is true, grave domestic political preoccupations, but they are not unique in this regard.

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